

Somehow American Radio has lost its focus as more and more stations consolidate. While there is an obvious economic advantage to mega group broadcasting, the current version of this has resulted in a very large loss of localism. While some have made fortunes, the loser is the American Public.

Sure, it is cost effective to program several hundred stations with a few voice tracked formats, but the end result is a loss of personality and local presence for each station involved. It's hard to be responsive to the needs of a community if only the sales people live in the stations area of service. As I drive around the country, I find it increasingly difficult to find radio stations that do not all sound the same. These homogenized stations no longer reflect the values and personality of the local community. If that's what I wanted to listen to, I could simply get satellite radio.

Although several group broadcasters have made some progress in an attempt to correct this, it has been too little too late. While I think the old regulations limiting station ownership to seven AM, seven FM and seven TV stations was too restrictive, I believe that the pendulum has simply swung too far. There need to be ownership caps on a per market basis. The current caps are too high.

One of the glimmering hopes for localism is the advent of LPFM. While not without its significant problems, it is one of the last venues open to small groups and community leaders to be heard on the airwaves. I encourage the establishment of more of these stations, as well as the establishment the possibility of existing LPFM stations expanding their service areas.